

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing method,
comprising ~~steps of~~:

obtaining input image information including input image data
from an input device;

5 discriminating plural ~~subjects~~ subject images existing in
the input image data;

dividing the input image data into plural subject ~~patterns~~
image data corresponding to the discriminated plural ~~subjects~~
subject images;

10 obtaining a relationship among the plural subject ~~patterns~~
images;

determining a processing method for the input image data of
the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images based on ~~a basis of~~ the
obtained relationship, and

15 processing the input image data of the plural subject
~~patterns~~ images in accordance with the determined processing
method so as to ~~obtain~~ produce output image data.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein as
the processing method, a respective processing method is
determined for each subject ~~pattern~~ image data based on
respective relevant information regarding each subject ~~pattern~~
5 image.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the respective relevant information regarding each subject ~~pattern~~ image includes priority order information set for each subject image.

4. (Current Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the priority order information is set in accordance with a kind of each subject image.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the priority order information includes a weighting value set in accordance with a degree of importance of each subject image.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~4~~ 3, wherein the dividing ~~step is conducted by a pattern~~ comprises an image extracting process to extract the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images from the input image data, and wherein the respective relevant information includes image pattern information regarding each extracted subject ~~pattern~~ image.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~3~~ 6, wherein the ~~pattern~~ image information includes sub-priority order information set for each subject ~~pattern~~ image in accordance with ~~existence situation~~ how each subject ~~pattern~~ image exists in an image area

5 of the input image data, and wherein the priority order
information is corrected by the sub-priority order information.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein the
sub-priority order information is set in accordance with at least
one of an occupation ratio of each subject ~~pattern~~ image to the
image area and a location of each subject ~~pattern~~ image on the
5 image area.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the
plural ~~subjects existing~~ subject images in the input image data
are discriminated in accordance with scene attribution of the
input image data.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~ 9, wherein
the input image information includes the scene attribution as
additional information.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~ 9, wherein
the input device inputs the scene attribution of the input image
data.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~3~~ 9, wherein
~~the~~ priority order information is set in accordance with the
scene attribution of the input image data.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~4~~ 6, wherein
when each subject ~~patter~~ image comprises plural unit ~~patterns~~
images, the ~~pattern image~~ extracting process extracts the plural
unit ~~patterns~~ images and detects ~~the~~ an existence situation of
5 each subject ~~pattern~~ image from connecting conditions among the
plural unit ~~patterns~~ images.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the
~~pattern image~~ extracting process ~~is conducted by the input device~~
~~in such a way that~~ comprises inputting on a screen on which the
input image data is indicated the location of each of the plural
5 unit images, ~~patterns is inputted on a screen on which the input~~
~~image data is indicated, and wherein the pattern extracting~~
~~process obtains~~ obtaining connecting relation information among
all of the extracted plural unit ~~patterns~~ images, ~~determines~~
determining the subject ~~pattern image~~ information from the
10 connecting relation information, ~~and extracts~~ extracting the
plural subject ~~patterns~~ images from the input image data based on
~~a basis of the subject~~ the image pattern information.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the
obtaining ~~step selects~~ of the input image information comprises
selecting a set of input image data from plural sets of input
image data, wherein the ~~pattern image~~ extracting process obtains
5 the subject ~~pattern image~~ information including the connecting

relation information from the selected set of input image data,
and ~~the processing step conducts the~~ wherein image processing is
conducted for the other sets of input image data by applying the
~~subject~~ image pattern information to the other sets of input
10 image data.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the
~~pattern~~ image extracting process extracts the plural subject
~~pattern~~ images in relation to customer information.

17. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus,
comprising:

a first obtaining section for obtaining input image
information including input image data from an input device;

5 a discriminating section for discriminating plural ~~subjects~~
subject images existing in the input image data;

a dividing section for dividing the input image data into
plural subject ~~patterns~~ image data corresponding to the
discriminated plural ~~subjects~~ subject images;

10 a second obtaining section for obtaining a relationship
among the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images;

a determining section for determining a processing method
for the input image data of the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images
based on ~~a basis of~~ the obtained relationship, and

15 a processing section for processing the input image data of
the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images in accordance with the
determined processing method so as to ~~obtain~~ produce output image
data.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium
having stored thereon a computer program for controlling a
computer to conduct ~~conducting~~ an image processing method [[,]]
comprising ~~steps of~~:

5 obtaining input image information including input image data
from an input device;

discriminating plural ~~subjects~~ subject images existing in
the input image data;

10 dividing the input image data into plural subject ~~patterns~~
image data corresponding to the discriminated plural ~~subjects~~
subject images;

obtaining a relationship among the plural subject ~~patterns~~
images;

15 determining a processing method for the input image data of
the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images based on ~~a basis of~~ the
obtained relationship, and

processing the input image data of the plural subject
~~patterns~~ images in accordance with the determined processing
method so as to ~~obtain~~ produce output image data.